

cables to said bridge so that the plane of the cables is at a desired distance below the bridge portion;

c) a floor comprising a plurality of flooring [sections] panels each extending transversely of said cables and resting on said cables, each of said panels having at least one means defining an opening therein [said flooring sections arranged in side-by-side relation longitudinally of said cables]; and

d) means for releasably securing said flooring [sections] panels to said cables, said releasably securing means including means defining eyelets on said flooring panels, each said opening at least partially receiving one of said eyelets, and said cables passing through respective ones of said eyelets on said flooring panels.

Claim ³~~23~~ (amended). A combination according to claim ¹~~21~~ wherein [each of said flooring sections has means defining an opening therein and wherein] said [releasably securing] eyelet means comprises, for each of said flooring [sections] panels, a first part which engages said respective flooring [section] panel and a second part which extends through said opening means in said respective flooring [section] panel for engaging one of said cables, said releasably securing means being disconnectable so that each individual flooring [section] panel can be removed to allow access through the flooring.

Claim ⁴~~24~~ (amended). A combination according to claim ¹~~21~~ wherein said flooring [sections] panels comprise corrugated elongated rectangular decking [panels] members with corrugations thereof extending transversely of said cables.

Claim ¹¹~~25~~ (amended). A method for supporting persons performing work on a portion of a bridge comprising installing a

platform below a deck of the bridge and supporting the persons on the platform, the step of installing the platform comprising the sub-steps of:

a) securing a plurality of cables to the bridge so that the cables extend along the bridge in spaced relation to each other and in a plane substantially parallel to the bridge deck at a selected distance below the bridge portion;

b) erecting a floor on the cables, the step of erecting the floor comprising resting on the cables a plurality of flooring [sections] panels each having at least one opening therein so that the flooring [sections] panels extend transversely of the cables [and are arranged in side-by-side relation longitudinally of the cables]; and

c) releasably securing the flooring [sections] panels to the cables, said sub-step of releasably securing the flooring panels including at least partially receiving in each of the openings and attaching to the respective flooring panel structure forming an openable eyelet, receiving the cables in the eyelets respectively while the eyelets are open, and closing the eyelets.

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Claim ¹³~~27~~ (amended). A method according to claim ¹¹~~25~~ wherein the sub-step of releasably securing the flooring [sections] panels comprises, for each of the flooring [sections] panels, engaging one part of [a] the eyelet structure with the respective flooring [section] panel, extending an other part of the eyelet structure through [an] the opening in the respective flooring [section] panel and engaging one of the cables therewith, and engaging the parts so that the structure is disconnectable so that each individual flooring [section] panel can be removed to allow access through the flooring.

⌈ Please add the following claims:


~~5~~ 28. A combination according to claim ~~21~~ wherein the bridge also has at least two spaced apart structural supports, said plurality of cables extend between said structural supports, and said cable securing means includes at least one member clampingly connected to each of said structural supports, said cables secured at respective ends thereof to said clampingly connected members respectively.

~~6~~ 29. A combination according to claim ~~21~~ wherein the bridge also has at least two spaced apart structural supports, said plurality of cables extend between said structural supports, and said cable securing means includes first beam means for contacting a surface of a respective one of said structural supports, second beam means for contacting an opposite surface of said respective one structural support, and compression force applying means for forcing said first and second beam means against said respective one structural support.

~~7~~ 30. A combination according to claim ~~21~~ wherein the bridge also has at least two spaced apart piers each having a pair of pedestals, said plurality of cables extend between said piers, and said cable securing means includes a single beam for contacting both of said pedestals of said respective pier, a pair of beams for contacting said pedestals respectively of said respective pier, and connecting rods for compressing said pair of beams and said single beam against said pedestals.

~~8~~ 31. A combination according to claim ~~21~~ further comprising at least one auxiliary supporting cable one end of which is connected to a respective one of said releasably securing means and an other end of which is connected to the bridge to provide additional support for said platform.

⁹/₃₂. A combination according to claim ¹/₂₁ further comprising at least one tarpaulin enclosure extending between said platform and the bridge for defining a region between said platform and the bridge which enhances containment of the debris.

 ¹⁰/₃₃. A combination according to claim ³/₂₃ wherein said second part comprises a plate-like body for engaging an upper surface of said respective panel and a substantially U-shaped hook formation extending from said body and through said opening means for engaging said respective cable and having a threaded free end portion which terminates above said respective panel, and wherein said first part comprises a plate-like body having an opening therethrough for receiving therethrough said threaded free end portion of said hook formation of said second part so that a nut can be threaded on said free end portion to fasten said first and second parts together.

Remarks

Applicant wishes to thank the examiner for the courtesies extended during the interview of July 6, 2000, at which time an appropriate scope of claims 21 and 25 was discussed to patentably distinguish over U.S. patents 4,660,680 to Potin and 629,935 to Sturgis as well as the other art of record. Claims 21 and 25, which have been amended to more clearly define what Applicant regards as the invention, are believed to be in accordance with the discussion.

The cancellation of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 15 to 20 render the rejections thereof moot.

Claims 21 and 25 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Potin, the claims dependent thereon also rejected.

As amended, claim 21 recites that each of said panels has at